IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claims 3, 10, and 17 as follows:

3. **(Once Amended)** A method of screening for a nucleic acid capable of inhibiting translation of a nucleic acid sequence containing an IRES wherein said nucleic acid sequence is from a Hepatitis A virus, said method comprising the step of administering to an organism said nucleic acid encoding a sequence that is complementary to at least a portion of said IRES, wherein the ability of said nucleic acid to inhibit translation of said viral nucleic acid sequence is detected by:

(a) contacting said nucleic acid with a reporter gene construct having the following elements operably linked: a replication origin, a promoter, a reporter gene, and said IRES, under conditions where said reporter gene is translated;

(b) measuring the level of the translation product of said reporter gene; and

(c) comparing said level of said translation product in (b) to the level of translation product synthesized by the reporter gene construct under the conditions of (a) but in the absence of said nucleic acid, thereby detecting said nucleic acid capable of inhibiting translation of said nucleic acid sequence.

6. **(Canceled)** The method of claim 3 wherein said virus is selected from the group consisting of hepatitus A, and hepatitus C.

10. **(Once Amended)** The method of claim 9, wherein said oligonucleotide further comprises a CAT nucleotide triplet.

17. **(Once Amended)** A pharmaceutical composition comprising a nucleic acid encoding a sequence that is complementary to at least a portion of a Hepatitis A virus IRES which contains a YX AUG sequence, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier, wherein the nucleic acid is present in an amount effective for inhibiting viral replication, wherein Y is a pyrimidine tract between 4 to 12 nucleotides, and wherein X is a random spacer sequence of between 5 to 30 nucleotides.

Please add new Claim 18 as follows:

18. **(Newly Added)** A composition comprising a nucleic acid encoding a sequence that is complementary to at least a portion of a Hepatitis A virus IRES which contains a YX AUG sequence, wherein the nucleic acid is present in an amount effective for inhibiting viral replication, and wherein Y is a pyrimidine tract between 4 to 12 nucleotides, wherein X is a random spacer sequence of between 5 to 30 nucleotides.

Please cancel Claim 6 without prejudice.

REMARKS

Claims 3, 6, 8-10 and 17 are pending in the instant application. Claim 17 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as lacking an enabling disclosure; and Claims 3, 6, 8-10 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

Claim 6 has been canceled herein without prejudice; Claims 3, 10, and 17 have been amended herein; and Claim 18 has been added herein. Support for amended Claim 3, and Claims 8-10 depending therefrom, can be found in the originally filed claim, and throughout the specification, and more specifically in the specification at (page:line) 104:2-107:20. Claim 10 has been amended herein to correct the dependency of this claim. Support for amended Claim 17 can be found in the originally filed claim, and throughout the specification, and more specifically in the specification at (page:line) 143:21-28. Support for new Claim 18 can be found in originally filed Claim 17, and throughout the specification, and more specifically in the specification at (page:line) 143:21-28. Thus, no new matter is added